

Marian Library Studies

Volume 31 *Volume 31 (2013-2014): Mary in the Consecrated Life*

Article 22

2013

The Marian Profile of Congregations Founded in the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Century: Re-Receiving Our Marian Charism and Tradition

Thomas A. Thompson
University of Dayton

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.udayton.edu/ml_studies



Part of the [Catholic Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Thompson, Thomas A. (2013) "The Marian Profile of Congregations Founded in the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Century: Re-Receiving Our Marian Charism and Tradition," *Marian Library Studies*: Vol. 31, Article 22, Pages 125-146.

Available at: https://ecommons.udayton.edu/ml_studies/vol31/iss1/22

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Marian Library Publications at eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Marian Library Studies by an authorized editor of eCommons. For more information, please contact frice1@udayton.edu, mschlangen1@udayton.edu.

FROM MONOGRAM TO MISSION

THE GIFT OF THE CHILD

Entrustment With The Child Jesus To Grow With It And For It



Fra Bernardinus Receives The Child Jesus From the Hands of Our Lady
c. de Aremberg Flores Seraphici, 1642

THE MARIAN PROFILE OF CONGREGATIONS FOUNDED IN THE SEVENTEENTH TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: RE-RECEIVING OUR MARIAN CHARISM AND TRADITION

The word re-reception, taken from the ecumenical dialogues, means to be faithful to the tradition by responding in fresh ways to the challenges presented in understanding the formulations of the past.

In the history of Christian spirituality, devotion to the Virgin Mary has been expressed in different ways, with many levels of dedication. These expressions range from the simple invocation of her name for assistance and protection, to the imitation of her virtues and commitment to her service. These various expressions can be found in the charisms and traditions of religious orders and congregations. As Father Wiseman's study pointed out, in early monasticism, there was little reference to Mary, but, by the eleventh century, all Cistercian monasteries (along with the Gothic cathedrals) carried the name *Notre Dame*. Practices of devotion emanated from the monasteries: Saturday of the Blessed Virgin, the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin, the classical Marian antiphons (*Salve Regina*, etc.). Later, the mendicant orders (Franciscans, Dominicans, Carmelites, Servites) developed and promoted prayers and practices of Marian devotion (the Scapular, Rosary, Angelus, Marian confraternities). Medieval preachers frequently spoke of the joys and sorrows of Mary with images with which people could identify (Mary at the creche, Mary at the Cross).

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Marian congregations influenced by Cardinal Pierre de Berulle, Jean-Jacques Olier, John Eudes (who were the leaders of what is now known as the French School of Spirituality) presented a spirituality which was intensely centered on the Incarnation of the Son of God, with the Virgin Mary as integral recipient in this "outpouring" of God's love. These authors also spoke much of the "interior states," that is, the perduring dispositions – including both the grandeurs and the abasement – of the Incarnate Word and his Virgin Mother. These writings on the "interior life" influenced many nineteenth century religious congregations who, after the French Revolution attempted to restore the faith, not solely through the restoration of religious institutions, but also through a Marian devotion which presented interior qualities of the Virgin Mary as an example for Christians.

After the defeat of Napoleon and the Congress of Vienna (1815), with the restoration of a stable government, the sometimes-called Catholic Restoration

opened the gates for what today would be called a new evangelization – with a strong Marian resonance. The Marian congregations of the nineteenth century were numerous.¹ Among them were the Marist family composed of the Fr. Jean-Claude Colin's Society of Mary (Marists), St. Marcellin Champagnat's Marist Brothers of the School, and Jeanne Marie-Chavoin's Marist Sisters; the Daughters of Mary (1816) and the Society of Mary (Marianists) in 1817 by Blessed William Joseph Chaminade; the Oblates of Mary Immaculate by Saint Eugene Mazenod in 1817; and the Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (1849) by St. Anthony Mary Claret.

Over forty congregations were dedicated to the Heart of Mary. The founders were influenced by St. John Eudes and his multi-volumed *The Admirable Heart of Mary*.² In 1765, Jean Gailhac founded the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, and the Jesuit Pierre-Joseph Pico de Clorivière (1735-1820) the Priests of the Sacred Heart and the Daughters of the Heart of Mary (1790). Fr. Delaplace founded the Servants of the Holy Heart of Mary. In 1848, Venerable Francis Liebermann combined the Congregation of the Holy Spirit with the Congregation of the Heart of Mary.

The theological questions concerning privileges of the Virgin Mary were not usually central to the spirituality of the congregations, although some congregations were dedicated to promote the papal definition of the Immaculate Conception. In addition, these congregations did not usually promote specific practices of Marian devotion. (For example, William Joseph Chaminade wished that all devotional practices are to be respected and encouraged.) Instead, these Marian congregations made significant contributions to Marian spirituality, or a *lived Marian devotion*. Their charisms were centered on the person of Mary – her faith, her love, her motherly care, her continuing mission.

Many gathered here at this symposium on the consecrated life are members of these Marian congregations founded in the nineteenth century and are now interested in reclaiming some of these insights into the qualities of the person of Mary as manifested in the charisms, traditions, and roots of their congregations. This recovery is motivated not only by the desire for a deeper

¹ The church historian, Roger Aubert, wrote, "The intensity of the piety connected with Mary in the nineteenth century was also demonstrated by the names which religious congregations adopted when they were founded in this period. Between 1802 and 1898, not a single year passed that did not witness the founding of one or more congregations devoted to the Virgin Mary, with especially numerous foundations in the decades 1830-40 and 1850-60." See "The Growth of Piety," chapter 15 in *The Church in the Age of Liberalism*, vol. 8 of *The History of the Church*, ed. By H. Jedin and J. Dolan (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 225-226.

² For an example, see Saint John Eudes, *The Admirable Heart of Mary*, tr. from the French by Charles di Targiani and Ruth Hauser, with a foreword by Richard J. Cushing (New York: P.J. Kenedy, 1948).

personal understanding but also for making these insights available to a larger and contemporary audience.

Sometimes the charisms of the past, expressed in what today may appear to be a limited context, are not understood. The language of the nineteenth century may at times seem quaint, patronizing, and devoid of any social dimension. Sentiments, especially those that relate to the person of Mary, may appear limited. The challenge today is to insert these charisms into a larger biblical and theological context – something that was not available to our spiritual ancestors. Many of these characteristics take on new significance when placed within an ecclesial context. An example is the “Mary-Church” typology present in the patristic era, but lost for many centuries and only recovered in the mid-twentieth century. These characteristics can be placed within the context of the ongoing development of the religious consecration and mission as found in Vatican II’s *Perfectae Caritatis*, the Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata* (VC) and the documents from religious congregations. The charisms of the past, in a new reception, can speak of “the unceasing work of the Holy Spirit...who in every age shows forth the richness of the practice of the evangelical counsels through a multiplicity of charisms” (VC 6).³

What follows is an attempt to present some of the features of the person of Mary found in the charisms and traditions of the Marian congregations – her love, her faith, her intercession, her maternal mission. After describing the original context in which the charisms arose, there follow a few suggestions on how the charisms can be enlarged and presented today. Although I have tried to include references to many nineteenth century Marian congregations, it will be soon apparent that I am most familiar with developments within the Marianists and the charisms of Blessed William Joseph Chaminade.

The Love of Mary at the Heart of the Church

The masters of the French School – Pierre de Berulle and Fr. Jean Jacques Olier – wrote much about Mary as the recipient of the overflowing love of God manifested in the Incarnation – so much so that Mary becomes one with Jesus. In the thought of Berulle, Jesus is defined as “relation itself – eternal and necessary, immutable and invariable, subsistent and personal.”⁴ In a similar way, Mary exists in pure relation to Jesus. “As the members subsist only in the mutual relations within the Trinity, so you, O holy Virgin, O person both divine and human, divine in grace and human in nature. You lived only by his grace

³ John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata*, Apostolic Exhortation on the Consecrated Life and Its Mission in the Church and in the World, AAS 88 (1996) [Hereafter cited as VC].

⁴ F. Bourgoing, «Introduction,» *Oeuvres de Bérulle*, p. xxx.

before he lived for us in his nature, and you breathe only his spirit: His grace and his greatness are yours.”⁵ St. Louis-Marie de Montfort also spoke of God’s love literally poured into the heart of Mary: “It is impossible on the one hand to put into words the gifts with which the Blessed Trinity endowed this most fair creature, or on the other hand to describe the faithful care with which she corresponded to the graces of her Creator. The torrential outpouring of God’s infinite goodness, which had been rudely stemmed by sin since the beginning of the world, was now released precipitously and in full flood into the heart of Mary.”⁶

Fr. Jean-Jacques Olier drew out the consequences of Mary’s maternity for the Church and humanity. Through the divine motherhood, Mary becomes the means by which the fecundity of the Father is communicated to the Church. “God the Father not only associated Mary in his fecundity in the Incarnation, he made her the mother of his Son in order to bring to life all the members of Jesus Christ through and with her. ... She is the sacrament of the eternal Father, who in her and with her has given birth to the only-begotten son and who now imparts and gives through her his life to all the rest of his family, that is, to his children by adoption.”⁷ Olier describes Mary’s cooperation as derived from the gift of zeal communicated to her by Christ: Through her this gift is given to the Church. Mary’s journey to her cousin Elizabeth was to allow Christ to communicate to John the Baptist the *apostolic spirit*. The Visitation makes evident the *order* of sanctification:

Being dependent on the Virgin Mary for his life, Christ wishes to give his grace and gifts only through her. The order he followed in making John the Baptist holy is the order which he will always follow: Having communicated his first grace to the Precursor through Mary, it will be always through her that he will impart his grace to the Church.⁸

Even before the revelation of the Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary, authors in the French School used the image of the heart to express the complete union of Jesus and Mary. St. John Eudes spoke of the heart of Mary in three senses –the divine heart, the human heart, and the spiritual heart. “The two hearts of Jesus and Mary, once so close physically are even closer by grace.” “Jesus,” St. John Eudes says, “is the source of life in his holy mother. He is the

⁵ *Oeuvres complètes du Cardinal de Bérulle (Discours de l'estat et des grandeurs de Jesus*. Paris: Estiene, 1644), vol. 2, 937. Paris: Estiene, 1644), vol. 2, 937.

⁶ Louis Grignon de Montfort, *Love of Eternal Wisdom*, in *God Alone* (Bay Shore NY, Montfort Publications, 1988): 79

⁷ Bérulle, *Oeuvres de Piété*, vol. 1, 935.

⁸ Jean-Jacques Olier, *La vie intérieure de la très Sainte Vierge: ouvrage recueilli des écrits de M. Olier*. (Rome: Salviucci, 1866) vol. 1, 291.

heart of her heart, the soul of her soul, so that we can truly say that there is one divine heart.”⁹ St. John Eudes promoted the liturgical celebration of the Heart of Mary (celebrated for the first time in 1648) and encouraged popular devotions and consecration to the Heart of Mary.

In the nineteenth century, the image of the Miraculous Medal, given to St. Catherine Labouré, contained on the reverse side the image of the Heart of Jesus and of Mary. Shortly after the apparition in 1830, a most influential event in Marian devotion occurred at the church of Notre Dame des Victoires in Paris. The discouraged pastor, Abbé Desgenettes (who had been influenced by Fr. Clorivière) was instructed to dedicate his parish to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and in 1836, Degennettes founded the Archconfraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary at the church. The parish flourished, and the Archconfraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary had enormous influence. (At one point, it had 20,000 affiliate confraternities and more than 20 million associates.)

St. Anthony Mary Claret was influenced by Abbé Desgennette’s work. With five priests, in 1849, he established the Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (FICM), also known as the Claretians.¹⁰ He proposed the Immaculate Heart of Mary as the great symbol of Mary’s love and dedication. He described the apostolic missionary, dedicated to the Heart of Mary, in the following terms:

A Son of the Immaculate Heart of Mary is a man on fire with love, who spreads its flames wherever he goes. He desires mightily and strives by all means possible to set the whole world on fire with God’s love. Nothing daunts him; he delights in privations, welcomes work, embraces sacrifices, smiles at slander, and rejoices in suffering. His only concern is how he can best follow Jesus Christ and imitate Him in working, suffering, and striving constantly and single-mindedly for the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls.¹¹

Soon after founding his religious family, Claret was called to serve in several positions: Missionary Apostolic in Catalonia and the Canaries, Archbishop of Santiago de Cuba, confessor to the queen of Spain. He left to the congregation his great zeal and the challenge of developing this devotion (now known as *cordimarian* spirituality). The first general chapter in 1862 designated the Heart of Mary as patroness of the Congregation. Devotion to the Immaculate

⁹ Jean Eudes, *Oeuvres complètes du Vénérable John Eudes* (Vannes: Lafolye, 1905), vol. 6, 102.

¹⁰ Cf. Garcia Garces, Narcisse, “La dévotion à la très sainte Vierge dans la congrégation des Missionnaires Fils du Coeur Immaculé de Marie,” in Du Manoir, *Marie* (Paris, Beauchesne: 1954): III, 405-428.

¹¹ Autobiografia, #494 in Juan Maria Lozano, *Mystic and Man of Action: Saint Anthony Mary Claret* (Chicago: Claretian Publications, 1977), 140.

Heart was promoted especially in the congregation's publications. After 1917, many members interpreted their charism as one of promoting the consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, as requested at Fatima.

For the Claretians, questions concerning the meaning of the original charism arose after Vatican II. The General Chapter of 1985 noted that "A widespread concern among us is the problem of updating, both in theory and in our lives, the Marian dimension of our charism. Biblical exegesis and a critical reading of the mariological traditions, as well as contemporary mariological approaches, have led some to question our traditional cordimarian teaching and its devotional expressions." In a letter addressed to the members of the congregation, entitled "Let Us Share Our Marian Spirituality," the superior general of the congregation asked the members: "1) How do you live your cordimarian spirituality? and 2) What suggestions would you offer for a greater living of cordimarian spirituality."¹²

The responses were collected and summarized by Fr. Jose Maria Hernandez Martinez. The heart, Fr. Hernandez wrote, is the innermost core and unifying center of the person. The devotion to the Heart of Mary introduces one into the principle or root of the interior life of Mary, into her living the gifts which God was pleased to enrich her when He prepared her in body and soul that she might be made worthy to be His mother. As love is the fundamental characteristic attitude of Mary, so *cordimarian* devotion is one of loving sonship. The Claretian charism is to affirm this central and all-embracing symbol of Mary's heart as the motivation for the consecrated life and for apostolic mission.¹³

The heart as a spiritual symbol is rooted in the Scriptures: "Son, give me your heart" (Proverbs 23:26). "A new heart create for me, O God" (Ezekiel 36:26). The symbol of the heart – even the Sacred Heart of Jesus – does not have the appeal that it once had (an observation confirmed by Jesuits such as Karl Rahner and Pedro Arrupe as they wrote of the devotion).¹⁴ It may be

¹² Jose Maria Hernandez Martinez, *Ex Abundantia Cordis: A Study of the Cordimarian Spirituality of the Claretian Missionaries* (Rome: Secretariat of the Heart of Mary: 1999). XOXO.

¹³ Martinez, *Ex Abundantia Cordis*, 28-42; 98.

¹⁴ Karl Rahner begins an essay, "Devotion to the Sacred Heart is going through a crisis." He continues that devotion to the Sacred Heart is "meaning and significant" in the present church and in modern spirituality.... The word heart...refers to the innermost center where the multiple is one.... We look at the heart of the Lord and the question that is decisive for eternity fills our innermost being, our innermost heart and life: Do you love me? Do you love me in such a way that this love generates a blessed eternity, that it truly powerfully and invincibly generates everlasting life?" "Devotion to the Sacred Heart Today," *Theological Investigations* (New York: Crossroads, 1992), 117-128, here 127.

because of sentimental imagery or the physicality of imagery, or because the practices associated with the devotion became so routine.

The mystical language which describes the permanence and intensity of the love in the heart of a mother for her son may be hard today to comprehend.¹⁵ In addition to the maternal relation, the language of the heart suggests a spousal relation, an image which abounds in Scripture, yet is difficult in pastoral situations to apply directly to Jesus and Mary.

St. Anthony Mary Claret, in addition to his devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, was also a student of ecclesiology. Beyond the social and hierarchical models of the Church present in the nineteenth century, he was attracted to the patristic images of the Church as the New Eve and as the spouse of Christ, and the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ. What was Mary's role in the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ? The traditional image was one of the "neck" joining the body to the head. But, Claret also seems to be among the first to see Mary as being at the very core of the Church as its heart, receiving grace from Christ and returning to him the love of the members:

To whom should we turn for help in practicing virtue and charity, if not Mary? She is all charity. Wherever Mary is, there is charity. In the Christian world, the Head is Jesus Christ and the Heart is the Virgin Mary.... For Mary is the Heart of the Church. This is why all works of charity spring from her. It is well known that the heart has two movements: systole and diastole. Thus Mary is always performing these two movements: absorbing grace from her Most Holy Son, and pouring it forth on sinners.¹⁶

Similarly, this ecclesial context for the inner sentiments for the heart of Mary is found in the works of Cardinal Charles Journet and Hans Urs Von Balthasar as they recovered the patristic image of the Church as Virgin, Bride, Mother. (Their writings preceded the reference of *Lumen Gentium* (LG) to Mary as type and model of the Church). For Journet, there is such a close relationship between Mary and the Church that one cannot be understood without the other. Mary is the "personal realization" of the Church, the Bride of Christ. Through her union with Christ, the infinite and divine source of grace, the

¹⁵ Teilhard de Chardin spoke about the Universal Christ in which "the heart of matter was impregnated with the divinity." Cf. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Heart of Matter* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 43. David Morgan, *The Sacred Heart of Jesus: the Visual Evolution of a Devotion* (Amsterdam University Press: 2008).

¹⁶ Cf. Lozano, *Mystic and Man of Action*, 226 (from a Conference given in 1863). Later Scheeben expressed the early patristic view: "Mary is the type (Vorbild) of the Church precisely in this that, in her person, the idea of the Church attains its first and most perfect realisation, through the fact that she herself belongs to the Church and is at the same time its principle member, its root and its heart" (*Dogmatik* 3 [Fribourg en B., 1882]), 504.

person of Mary is enhanced, allowing her to become more a Mother, more a Bride, more a Virgin. "It is through the Virgin Mary that the Church can truly be, in her turn Mother, Bride, and Virgin. ... Mary is Mother, Bride, and Virgin, *prior* to the Church and *for* the Church; it is *in* her, above all, and *by* her that the Church is Mother, Bride, and Virgin." The whole Church is Marian in the sense that "Mary is in the Church, to whom she communicates her spirit." Mary is the highest realization of that which the Church is called to be.¹⁷

Vatican II's *Lumen Gentium* presented the Church as "the sign and instrument of communion with God and of unity among all people" (LG 1). The 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops affirmed *communio* as the central image of Vatican II's concept of the Church. But, *communio* is not abstract; it must be personified. Cardinal Ratzinger's explanation echoes Journet and Balthasar:

[T]he Church is not an apparatus, nor a social institution, nor one social institution among many others. It is a person. It is a woman. It is a Mother. It is alive. A *Marian* understanding of the Church is totally opposed to the concept of the Church as a bureaucracy or a simple organization. At its very beginning the Church was not made, but given birth. She existed in the soul of Mary from the moment she uttered her Fiat.¹⁸

The Faith of Mary: Model of Religious Consecration

The word *faith* has many meanings. In the post-Revolutionary period nineteenth-century France, many believed that the "new way of thinking" proposed by the *philosophes* and *libertins* brought harm and contributed to an atmosphere of indifference to the Christian message with a consequent lessening of *faith*. William Joseph Chaminade wrote that "In our own day the great prevailing heresy is religious indifference, which spreads by numbing souls in a stupor of selfishness and the mire of passions.... The divine torch of faith is growing dim and flickering out in the very heartland of Christendom." The Enlightenment proposed Deism, a form of religion which acknowledged a God, but made no allowance for divine revelation or the divinity of Christ. "God has called not only to sanctify ourselves, but to raise up the faith in France, in Europe, and in all the world...."¹⁹

¹⁷ Journet, *The Theology of the Church*, 98; Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Office of Peter and the Structures of the Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1986) 200-206; Brendan Leahy, *The Marian Profile in the Ecclesiology of Hans Urs von Balthasar* (New York: New City Press, 2000) 106-135.

¹⁸ Joseph Ratzinger, "Ecclesiology of Vatican II," *L'Osservatore Romano*, 23 Jan 2002.

¹⁹ Letter of August 24, 1839 in *Ecrits marials* 2: 75. (English translations, with the same numeration as in the *Ecrits*, can be found in Marian Writings [Dayton: Marianist Resources Commission, 1980]. A publication completely dedicated to the Letter of 1839 is *The Letter and*

The definition of the faith which Chaminade received from the Council of Trent distinguished faith from charity. For the Council of Trent, faith was the beginning of justification; it was divine enlightenment. From that perspective, Chaminade wrote:

Faith is a light from God which irradiates the soul and has it enjoy great happiness because it is of the same nature as that glory which eternal happiness will procure for us.²⁰

Faith is the most exalted and the most excellent of all the forms of knowledge which we have in this life.²¹

Besides the intellectual element of assent, there were other dimensions of faith, such as a practical or operative dimension which Chaminade sometime referred to as "faith of the heart." In his instruction on faith, he insisted that our hearts must be led by the interior guidelines of faith.

The one who is righteous will live by faith (Romans 1:17).... 'For one believes with the heart and so is justified' (Romans 10:10). The just man not only believes the truths religion proposed to him, but he observes and loves them; and through a true affection of the heart, he makes them serve as the foundation and the steps for the proper functioning of justice.²²

But an even fuller concept of faith is present when Chaminade refers to the Virgin Mary's faith. Chaminade drew on the Augustinian tradition which spoke of the primacy of Mary's faith and charity:

How admirable is the faith of the august Mary. She believes in the mysteries announced to her, and these mysteries are accomplished in her, and they are accomplished only because she has believed. *Credidisti, perficienter*: faith, fulfillment. What a lesson for us.... *Substantia sperandarum rerum* (Hebrews 11:1).²³

That which I have admired for a long time is that Mary at the moment of the Incarnation shared in the fecundity of the Father by her lively faith animated by charity.... It is also by faith that we too conceive Jesus Christ in ourselves.²⁴

Mary's participation in the mysteries of salvation was made possible through her mission coming from God and through her active faith and love:

All these mysteries of love were not accomplished in Mary without her active participation. They took place in her only after she had pronounced the Fiat

the Spirit, edited by Thomas A. Stanley, S.M., and Robert H. Hughes, S.M., (Dayton: Marianist Press, 1979), 54.

²⁰ William Joseph Chaminade, *Writings on Faith* (Dayton, OH: NACMS, 2005): #498.

²¹ William Joseph Chaminade, *Writings on Faith*, #1109.

²² William Joseph Chaminade, *Writings on Faith*, #655.

²³ *Ecrits marials*, 2:635. *Marian Writings* 2:635 (Dayton: Marianist Resources Commission, 1980).

²⁴ *Ecrits marials*, 2:116.

that brought happiness to heaven and earth. It was her admirable faith that effectively disposed her to receive all the favors of the Most High.²⁵

Mary was not a passive instrument. She was called to *cooperate* in God's plan of redemptive love, and this cooperation was accepted by God as a contribution to the work of salvation:

By her consent to the Incarnation of the Word, the Blessed Virgin contributed most powerfully and effectively to the work of our Redemption and by this very consent, she devoted herself so completely to our salvation, that it may be asserted that she bore all men in her womb as a true mother does her children.²⁶

Classical Marian treatises of the nineteenth century made little reference to Mary's faith. Rather, in accord with the medieval tradition, they spoke of Mary's knowledge – acquired and infused. Even the mariologist, Emile Neubert, S.M., reflected the classical tradition when he limited Mary's faith to a "deeper penetration" of the Scriptures.

It was Vatican II's Decree on Divine Revelation (*Dei Verbum*-DV) which provided a larger concept to faith, one derived from the nature of divine revelation. Revelation was more than a series of propositions to be assented to by the intellect. Revelation was essentially God's "presence and self-manifestation by words and works, signs and miracles, but, above all, by his death and glorious resurrection, and finally by sending the spirit of truth."²⁷ The response to self-revelation of God can only be total response of the whole person. "The obedience of faith" is the phrase used to describe faith as the response to God's revelation. It requires first of all the attentive listening to the word by which God is revealed and then acceptance of that word into one's life (DV 5). "Sacred Scripture calls this human response to God, the author of revelation, 'the obedience of faith'.... To obey... in faith is to submit freely to the word that has been heard, because its truth is guaranteed by God, who is Truth itself" (Catechism of the Catholic Church [CCC], 143, 1444).

When speaking of Mary's faith, *Lumen Gentium* (LG) used the language found in *Dei Verbum*: "...In a wholly singular way she cooperated by her obedience, faith, and hope and burning charity in the work of the Savior.... (LG 61). "Through her faith and obedience she gave birth on earth to the very Son of the Father" (LG 63). A major section of John Paul II's *Redemptoris Mater* (RM) dealt with Mary's pilgrimage of faith (LG 57): "As the Council teaches, 'The obedience of faith' (Romans 16:26; cf. Romans 1:5; 2 Corinthians 10:5-6) must be given to God who reveals, an obedience by which man entrusts his whole

²⁵ *Ecrits marials*, 2:635.

²⁶ *Ecrits marials*, 2:662.

²⁷ AAS 58 (1966) conclusion.

self freely to God. This description of faith found perfect realization in Mary. 'Blessed is she who believed' is the 'key' which unlocks for us the innermost reality of Mary: To believe means "to abandon oneself" to the truth of the word of the living God, knowing and humbly recognizing 'how unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways'" (Romans 11:33) (RM 13).

The Catechism of the Catholic Church developed the comparison between the faith of Mary and of Abraham: Both Abraham and Mary believed that "Nothing is impossible with God." Abraham is the model of the "obedience of faith, the Virgin Mary is its most perfect fulfillment" (CCC 149). Mary is the model of the response of faith: "In the faith of his humble handmaid, the Gift of God found the acceptance he had awaited from the beginning of time. She whom the Almighty made 'full of grace' responds by offering her whole being: Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be [done] to me according to your word." "Fiat": this is the Christian prayer: to be wholly God's because he is wholly ours" (CCC 2617).²⁸

The "obedience of faith" is a fundamental element in the consecrated life. Vatican II spoke of the religious profession as a consecration to God (LG 44). Consecration involves two aspects: First, God's initiative of calling and then the individual's acceptance of this calling. *Vita Consecrata* speaks of the consecrated life as "a special and fruitful deepening of the consecration received in Baptism." (VC 30) This consecration of the person is fundamental to the profession of evangelical counsels. The meaning of consecration is found in Christ who was the first consecrated person "When he came into the world," he said, "Behold, I come to do your will, O God" (Hebrews 10: 5-7; cf. Psalm 40:7-9). Every form of consecrated life exists and is defined in reference to Christ, "whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world in a supreme way" (John 10:36).²⁹ The Virgin Mary is proposed as the "sublime example of perfect consecration," because she reminds consecrated persons of "the primacy of God's initiative and, because, having given her consent to the divine word, she is the model of the acceptance of grace" (VC 28).

The Mission of Mary and the Consecrated Life

Although the Council of Trent said nothing about mission, the post-Tridentine Church witnessed an outburst of missionary activity (one historian termed

²⁸ Other references to the Faith of Mary in the CCC: 972, 2617, 2502.

²⁹ *Servants of the Magnificat: the Canticle of the Blessed Virgin and Consecrated Life (SM) 21th General Chapter of the Order of Servants of Mary* (Rome: General Curia OSM, 1996). Text from Essential Elements of and in the Church's Teachings as Applicable to Institutes Dedicated to Works of Apostolate (31 May 1983), 6.

it a *Missionskirche*³⁰). The 16th and 17th centuries were the period of exploration and colonization of America and parts of Asia; this "first evangelization" (contrasted with the *new* evangelization) was spearheaded largely by the religious orders, especially the Franciscans, Jesuits, and Augustinians.

After the Napoleonic wars and the Congress of Vienna (1815), Catholic Europe witnessed a renewed interest in the foreign missions, manifested in the new forms of missionary organizations and associations of lay people who supported the missions through their prayer and contributions. Pauline Jaricot founded the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in Lyons, France, 1822. The sense of mission was not limited to the foreign missions but also to the ongoing mission *ad intra*, as suggested by St. Charles Borromeo and St. Vincent de Paul with the notion of "permanent mission."

As the Virgin Mary had been a symbol of Catholicism during the Counter-Reformation, she was seen in a similar way during the period of Restoration. The "vacuum" which resulted from the suppression of the Society of Jesus (1773) with its missionary dynamism was a factor giving rise to a Society of Mary as its replacement. In the Marian shrine of Le Puy, Jean Claude Courveille was inspired to found a Society of Mary, just as Ignatius had founded a Society of Jesus. At Lyon, it was this message which influenced the first Marists, Fr. Jean-Claude Colin, St. Marcellin Champagnat, and Jeanne Chauvin to assist the Church by founding the Marist Family, the "work of Mary,"³¹ to provide the same apostolic dynamism which the Jesuits had offered at an earlier period. The newly-founded Marists sent Peter Chanel to the South Pacific, and his martyrdom (1841) confirmed the congregation's missionary charism.

A strong sense of mission was present in the "Missionaries of Providence," founded in 1816 by St. Eugene Mazenod, a congregation later to be known as the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. William Joseph Chaminade's sense of mission, echoing that of the Jesuits, required "going even, if necessary, to the ends of the earth." He would also later write that as "a justly renowned order has taken the name and standard of Jesus Christ, so we have taken the name and standard of Mary and are ready to go wherever she calls..."³²

Prominent in post-Tridentine Catholicism and strengthening the sense of mission was great confidence in Mary's power to overcome and conquer the evil one, a conviction drawn from the image of the woman crushing the serpent

³⁰ Hubert Jedin's term. Cf. John W. O'Malley, *Trent and All That: Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 66.

³¹ During the exile in Saragossa, several emigres appeared interested in a project of starting a Society of Mary, a project frequently associated with Jean Claude Couveille (Pierrel, *Sur les chemins*, 57).

³² *Ecrits Marials* (Fribourg, Suisse: Séminaire Marianiste, 1966), 2:74.

drawn from Genesis 3:15, a key text to illustrate the Immaculate Conception. When Pius V approved the rosary in 1569, he noted that the "Virgin Mary alone has crushed all heresies and the head of the serpent," and that where Dominic and his sons promoted this prayer, "the darkness of heresy receded and the light of faith reappeared." The victories of the Christian forces at Lepanto, 1570 (and also at Vienna, 1663) were attributed to Mary, *Auxilium Christianorum*. After Lepanto, Pius V added the title *Auxilium Christianorum* to the Litany of Loreto and instituted the feast of Our Lady of Victory, later changed to Our Lady of the Rosary.

On his return to Rome from exile on May 24, 1815, Pius VII inserted *Auxilium Christianorum* into the liturgical calendar of the Papal States. Confidence in Mary's assistance to the Church was reflected in the pope's documents: "Let us raise our eyes and hands to the most holy Virgin Mary, who alone crushes all heresies and is our greatest reliance and the whole reason for our hope" (Gregory XVI, *Mirari Vas*, 1832); and "Let us invoke...especially the Blessed Virgin Mary, who has the power to end all the heresies in the whole world" (Gregory XVI, *Inter praecipuas machinationes*, 1844).

Confidence in Mary's assistance to the Church is found in Chaminade's Letter of 1839:

All the ages of the Church have been marked by the combats and the glorious triumphs of the August Mary. Since the Lord has decreed the enmity between her and the serpent (Genesis 3:15), she has conquered the world and the forces of hell. All the heresies, the Church tells us, have receded before the Holy Virgin Mary, and little by little she has reduced them to silence.... Mary's power has not been shortened. It is our firm belief that she will conquer this heresy like all the rest, for she is today as she ever was, the incomparable Woman, the woman of the promise who is to crush the head of the infernal serpent.... To her, therefore, is reserved a great victory in our day, for to her belongs the glory of saving the faith from the destruction with which it is being threatened.³³

For Chaminade, Mary's mission was more than assisting the Church against its foes: It is also one of fostering and guiding those to whom, along with Christ, his Mother had brought to life. It was the mission which the Virgin Mary received at the Annunciation, a mission made possible by her Fiat. Chaminade outlined the phases of Mary's spiritual maternity: At the Annunciation, Mary conceived Christ physically, and, at the same time, through her faith and love, she conceived, along with Christ, the members of Christ's body:

In conceiving the Savior in her womb, she understood that she conceived the whole Christ, both his physical and his mystical body ... By conceiving the Sav-

³³ *Ecrits Marials*, 2: 73.

ior in her virginal womb, she conceived spiritually – through her love and faith – all Christians, members of the Church and of Jesus.³⁴

She continues her mission, and on Calvary she confirms it by the acceptance of the cross:

Let us not think that, at this most dolorous moment, this most tender of mothers forgets her mission: She accepts the cross. As she accepts the cross for Jesus, she also accepts it for herself.³⁵

The mission of Mary does not end on Calvary.... Her love, stronger than the sorrow of death, allows her to survive that which would have destroyed many others.... As the New Eve, she participates in the resurrection of the son; she is present at the Ascension, and she is in vigil with the apostles at the Cenacle.... She extends her maternal care to the infant church...and in heaven, she continues to cooperate in the great work of our redemption.³⁶

What is distinctive is that Chaminade designates his followers in the work of assisting the Blessed Virgin Mary. In that same letter of 1839, Chaminade wrote that Mary “enrolls her children in her militia and consecrates us as apostles.”

We too have been called, as we believe, by Mary herself, to assist her with all our might in the struggle against the great heresy of our times.

Ours is indeed a grand work, a magnificent work, and if it is universal in scope, it is because we are missionaries of Mary, who says to us, “Do whatever he tells you.” Yes, we are all missionaries and to each one of us the Blessed Virgin gives the mandate to work at the salvation of our brethren in the world.³⁷

Vatican II spoke of Mary’s spiritual motherhood and her ongoing care for the members of Christ’s body. She cooperates, with a mother’s love, in bringing forth and forming the members of Christ’s body (LG 62). “She cares for the brethren of her son, who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and difficulties, until they are led into their blessed home” (LG 62). The Church sees in Mary’s motherly love a model for its apostolic mission (LG 65).

Missionaries of the Gospel or Promoters of Marian Devotion?

In some religious congregations, the question has arisen as to whether the members were to be missionaries of the Gospel or promoters of Marian devotion. Rightly understood, Marian devotion is very much part of the Gospel message. The mission of Mary is not something separate from that of Christ’s and those who assist Mary are not separate from the mission of the Church.

³⁴ *Ecrits Marials*, 2: 482.

³⁵ *Ecrits Marials*, 2: 474.

³⁶ *Ecrits Marials*, 2: 474.

³⁷ *Ecrits Marials*, 2: 82.

Whereas, at one time, the notion of consecration and of mission may have been thought to be separate, it is now clear that mission flows from consecration.

Vita Consecrata tells us that "the sense of mission is at the very heart of every form of consecrated life" (VC 25). Both consecration and mission are exemplified in the Christ: "As Christ was consecrated and sent into the world (John 10:36), making his whole life a salvific mission, in a similar manner, consecrated persons, called to reproduce in themselves the image of the first-born (Romans 8:29), through the action of the Spirit, must make their whole life a mission."³⁸

The consecrated life always has a double dimension: It is intrinsically linked to a radical and vital synthesis of consecration and mission, as exemplified in the Virgin Mary.³⁹ In 1991, in an address in Hungary to seminarians and novices, Pope John Paul said:

May the Virgin Mary help you to grasp the double dimension of your vocation... that of coming to Jesus Savior in order to be with him, and that of going towards the world in order to save it. If we want to live in the will of God, we must link this double commitment together. With Mary, you too must always succeed in putting together these two attitudes which, far from being opposed, call for and complete each other.⁴⁰

The Virgin Mary illustrates the inseparability of consecration and mission. In the words of a Servite Chapter document, Mary of Nazareth is "the first and highest expression of the relationship between consecration and mission. We are convinced of this and Sacred Scripture, when read in the light of the experience of consecrated life in the Church, confirms our conviction."⁴¹

The mission is not left undefined. It has a specific character: to participate in the mission of the Church which is one striving for communion. In his study of the consecrated life in the writings of Pope John Paul II, Fr. Stoeckl proposes a formula which identifies the mission of the consecrated life with the Holy Spirit's mission with the Church:

Mission is *for* Communion – Through the Church, the Holy Spirit brings humanity gradually into communion with Christ and the Father.

Mission is *of* Communion – Living in fraternal communion is a convincing missionary sign and source of mission.

³⁸ *From Instrumentum Laboris. Servants of the Magnificat*, #19.

³⁹ Cf. VC 28.

⁴⁰ Address to Seminarians and Novices in Budapest, August 19, 1991, in Fidelis Stoeckl, ORC, *Mary, Model and Mother of the Consecrated Life: A Marian Synthesis of the Theology of the Consecrated Life Based on the Teachings of John Paul*" (Manila: ICLA Publications, 2003), 290.

⁴¹ *Servants of the Magnificat*, #19.

Mission is accomplished *in Communion* – The Holy Spirit is the author of gifts that complement each other and express the communion of the Trinity.⁴²

Mother Mary, Mother Church

The most ancient Marian titles were the “All-Holy (*Panaghia*),” the New Eve,” “Mother of God.” In the East, *Theotokos* was the near-universal way for referring to the Virgin Mary, but in the medieval West popular piety usually addressed Mary with the title of respect for royalty and nobility – either Queen or Our Lady. Although the *Ave Maris Stella* does ask Mary to “show yourself a mother (*Monstra te Esse Matrem*),” references to motherhood in the litanies and other prayers usually refer to a quality of the person of Mary or to Christ, for example, Mother most pure, Mother most chaste, Mother of the Savior. There are some references to Mary’s universal motherhood in the medieval period (St. Anselm said, “*Mater Dei, Mater nostra*”), but few found their way into the popular Marian piety. Religious congregations, such as the Dominicans and the Servites, sometimes referred to Mary as the mother of the religious family. The various acts of consecration of the sodalities referred to Mary “my Queen, Mother of Mercy, Mother of God, Mother of Christ” – but not as my Mother.⁴³

In the seventeenth century, St. John Eudes spoke of Mary as “Mother of God and Mother of us all,” and occasionally St. Louis Grignon de Montfort refers to Mary as “my Mother and my Mistress” (a reference to his teaching on the holy slavery).⁴⁴ References to Mary’s spiritual motherhood are found especially in St. Anthony Mary Claret, the founder of the Missionary Sons [and Daughters] of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. He wrote, “...Mary is not only Mother of God but also Our Mother. It is on those titles that her grandeur rests and which gives us hope.” He frequently repeated “Mother, behold your Son.”⁴⁵

William Joseph Chaminade referred to Mary not only as *mother*, but also as *our mother*.⁴⁶ Early in his ministry (1806), he described the members of the

⁴² Stoeckl, Mary, *Mother and Model*, 314.

⁴³ Theodore Koehler, “The Prayers of the Faithful to Mary, our Mother, during the Last Two Centuries: Before Vatican II. Some Examples.” Kevelaer, III, 1987, 269-281. Especially 270, citing a study of E. Mullan E. La congregazione mariana studiata nei documenti (Roma, 1911, 5. Theodore Koehler, “Les titres données a Marie, Notre Mère, aux XIX et au XX Siècles: Avant le Concile Vatican II. Kevelaer, I .195-215.

⁴⁴ *A Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Part II, Section II), London: Burns, Oates, Sixth Edition, 124.

⁴⁵ Garces, Narcisse Garcia, “La Dévotion à la très sainte Vierge dans la Congrégation des Missionnaires Fils du Coeur Immaculé de Marie,” in Du Manoir, *Marie*, 407.

⁴⁶ Similarly, St. Therese of Lisieux said: “We know very well that the Blessed Virgin is Queen of heaven and earth, but she is more Mother than Queen” (*Derniers entretiens*, 23, 8.7).

sodalities as a "society of fervent Christians, who have only one heart and one soul and who form only one family not only as God's children and members of the Christ's Body but also as Mary's children." In his *Manual of the Servant of Mary*, the two chapters which are among the most fully developed in the work are "Mary, Mother of Christians," and "Mary Fulfills her Duties as Mother to Us":

It follows that Mary is *our* Mother, not only by adoption, but by the spiritual rebirth... She becomes our Mother when she conceived the Son of God ...at the Cross of Jesus, she brought us to life, but it was at the Annunciation that she became *our* Mother." (II 486)

At the foot of the cross, she shows herself to be *our* Mother as she offers for our salvation, the God-man, her first born.... (II 488)

We are then the children of Mary; we belong to her as a child belongs to his mother (II 491)

Rather than the relation of servant, slave, or soldier to Mary, Chaminade preferred to speak of the mother-child relation. He frequently referred to his followers as Mary's children – sons, daughters, brothers, sisters (the words are in the plural) – and, it is for that reason, that he would have preferred the term *family* for his religious organization.⁴⁷ One of the titles which appear original with Chaminade was Mary "Mother of Youth," especially applicable to young people but perhaps also to all the children of Mary. "O, how happy are the children of Mary. The mother of Jesus is truly their mother. Mary was more pleased to conceive them spiritually than to have done physically."⁴⁸ His preference for the title became part of the Marianist tradition. The Three O'clock Prayer (1891 text) read: "Saint John be our patron and model and obtain for us the grace of imitating your filial piety to Mary, our Mother."

Chaminade's references to Mary as mother were influenced by his concept of the Church as described in the Acts of the Apostles: "The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common" (Acts 4:23). He was also influenced by the Pauline image of the Church as the "mystical Body of Christ," an ecclesiology not common in the 19th century. In his words, the Church was "a union by which all the living members of the Church share whatever they have and by which the riches, strength, and health of one become by charity the riches, strength, and health of another...a union which makes the living members of the Church not only members of Jesus Christ, but

⁴⁷ *Ecrits marials*, 2:318.

⁴⁸ *Ecrits marials*, 2:11.

in a very true sense, Jesus Christ Himself.”⁴⁹ The reality of Mary’s maternity was another bond of union among the members. “Mary has really conceived the true body of Our Savior by the Holy Ghost; she has also conceived His Mystical Body, which is the society of the saints and of all the faithful.”⁵⁰ The reality of Mary’s motherhood not only united the members but also was the bond of union uniting the members to Christ.⁵¹

It was not until 1904 that a papal document spoke of Mary as mother of members of Christ’s body.

Therefore all we who are united to Christ, and as the Apostle says are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones (Ephesians 30), have issued from the womb of Mary like a body united to its head. Hence, though in a spiritual and mystical fashion, we are all children of Mary, and she is Mother of us all. Mother, spiritually indeed, but truly Mother of the members of Christ, who are we (S. Aug. L. de S. Virginitate, c. 6).⁵²

Lumen gentium referred to Mary as “our Mother in the order of grace” (LG 61), and, at the Vatican II, Paul VI “solemnly proclaimed Mary, Mother of the Church,” and he explained that, “as Mother of Christ, head of the Mystical Body, she is Mother of the Church and, all its members.”

Mother and *our mother* are titles which resonate with ecclesial significance. *Mother* is the most ancient title of the Church and one which, in the view of the early writers, sums up in an “effective way...the entire Christian aspiration” (*mater ecclesia*).⁵³ Galatians 4:26 refers to “that Jerusalem which is above...our Mother.” Cyprian of Carthage stated, “You cannot have God as Father if you do not have the Church as Mother.” His commentary on the Our Father points out the significance of the plural pronoun adjective *our* [not my]: “We do not say My Father, who art in heaven or Give me this day my daily bread; nor does each one ask that only his own debt should be forgiven him; nor does he request for himself alone that he may not be led into temptation but delivered from evil. Our prayer is public and common, and when we pray, we pray

⁴⁹ .cited in Thomas A. Stanley, S.M., *The Mystical Body of Christ according to the Writings of Father William Joseph Chaminde: A Study of His Spiritual Doctrine* (Fribourg: St. Paul’s, 1952), 97. (Notes for instructions: no. 3, 57-58).

⁵⁰ Stanley, *The Mystical Body of Christ*, 112 (Retreat of 1827; notes by Chevaux).

⁵¹ “Father Chaminade seized upon this implication, developed it, lived it and made of it one of his contributions to the history of spirituality.” Thomas A. Stanley, S.M., *The Mystical Body of Christ*, Stanley, 254.

⁵² Pius X, *Ad Diem Ilium Laetissimum* On The Immaculate Conception, AAS 10 (1904).

⁵³ International Theological Commission, “Memory and Reconciliation: the Church and Faults of the Past,” citing Karl Delhaye, *Ecclesia Mater Chez les Peres des Trois Premiers Siecles* (Paris: 1964) 128. *Origins* 29/39 (March 16, 2000) 625-644, here 635.

not for one person but for the whole people, since we, the whole people, are one." Similarly, Chaminade noted that just as the Lord instructed us to say Our Father, so "the children of Mary cry out Our Mother."⁵⁴

Vatican II spoke only in passing of the Church as mother: the document on the Liturgy made three references to "Holy Mother Church" (SC 4, 60, 122). *Lumen gentium* referred first to the Church as the "sign and the instrument, that is, of communion with God and of unity among all," proposed various Scriptural images of the Church, and then devoted the two succeeding chapters to the Church as the People of God and the Hierarchical Church. The image of the Church as People of God may have underscored the need for inclusion and participation but it may also have suggested a sociological image of the Church. As Fr. Raymond Brown has pointed out, each image of the Church has its advantages and also its limitations.⁵⁵ A participative image should be balanced with a more organic one which suggests the bonds of union with Christ and with other members of the Church.

Occasional reference to the Church as mother or our mother – reinforced also by the image of Mary as *our mother* – suggests the image of the Church as life-giving and life-sustaining, of the Church as a family – all with a Marian resonance. The Church as mother could also convey an image of the Church which takes on the weaknesses, shortcomings, and even the sins of its members. This image of the Church who suffers and takes on the burdens of her people can "encourage people to take their role in caring for the Church, their mother, and to share in her motherhood." One could also "expect that the rich warmth of the Mother image would soften any harsh institutional or juridical views...."⁵⁶

At the Great Jubilee of the Millennium, Pope John Paul II several times asked forgiveness for the sins of the Church as integral to the Purification of Memory.⁵⁷ And the question arose of how the holiness of the Church could be reconciled with the sins of its members. One small part of the theological explanation dealt with Mother Church who "takes upon herself also the weight of past faults in order to purify memory and to live the renewal of heart and life....The Church as a true mother cannot but be wounded by the sin of her

⁵⁴ *Ecrits Marials*, 2:762.

⁵⁵ Raymond Brown, *The Churches the Apostles Left Behind* (New York: Paulist Press, 1984) 59-60.

⁵⁶ Christopher O'Donnell, *Ecclesia: A Theological Encyclopedia of the Church* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1996), 312.

⁵⁷ John Paul II, "The Purification of Memory," in *Origins* 29/40 (March 23, 2000) 649.

children of yesterday and today, continuing to love them always to the point of making herself responsible at all times for the burden created by their sins...."⁵⁸

The notion of re-reception is found in ecumenical dialogue, especially the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) document, "The Gift of Authority" (1999), and in "Mary, Grace and Hope in Christ" (2004). Re-reception is defined as "an act both of faithfulness and freedom.... The freedom to respond in fresh ways in the face of new challenges is what enables the Church to be faithful to the Tradition which carries forward." Similarly, Yves Congar spoke of "rereading" the past disputes and Joseph Ratzinger advocated viewing the past within a "hermeneutic of unity." As he established the Office for the Evangelization, Pope Benedict spoke of *reproposing* the truths of the faith, that is, announcing again in new ways the ancient message.⁵⁹

This study has attempted a type of re-reception by presenting the Marian charisms in their original settings and then by viewing them in a larger, usually an ecclesial, context. It has been an examination of the qualities of the person of the Virgin Mary – her love, her faith, her mission, her maternal care for the members of Christ's body. A clear understanding and appreciation of our Marian charisms is a step toward reflecting them in our lives and that of our communities. The Servite *Servants of the Magnificat* notes that "the charisms of the institutes of the consecrated life is one of the ways that the Church today presents the Blessed Virgin to the world" (26), and, in the words of Pope John Paul II addressed to those in consecrated life in the Marian Year: "Since the Mother of God is constantly present in the life of the Church because of her part in the mystery of Christ, your vocation and your service are an echo of this presence of hers."⁶⁰

⁵⁸ International Theological Commission, "Memory and Reconciliation: the Church and Faults of the Past," Introduction.

⁵⁹ Cardinal Wuerl's comment on the pope's text and on the new evangelization said "Somehow in what we do and how we express our faith, we have to be able to repropose our belief in Christ and his gospel for a hearing among those who are convinced that they already know the faith and it holds no interest for them...Yet for some who initially heard this incredible proclamation, the message has become stale and the vision has faded. The promises seem empty or unconnected to their lives." Archbishop Donald Wuerl, "Pastoral Letter on the New Evangelization," *Origins* 40/16 (September 23, 2010) 241-150, here 242.

⁶⁰ Servite #23. Homily of John Paul II, May 22, 1988.